

Virtual Work Policy for City Employees

Effective Date: June 1, 2020

Policy Version No.: 4

Point of Contact: Stephanie Tipton, Chief Administrative Officer and Michael Zaccagni, Interim Human Resources Director

I. Statement of Policy

The City of Philadelphia's workforce provides essential services to over 1.5 million City residents, including protecting residents' lives, providing residents with educational opportunities, and improving residents' health. Although providing those services often requires onsite presence, the City remains committed to enhancing the work-life balance of its employees and offering flexible working environments when possible. To that end, this policy applies to all City employees who have been directed or approved to work remotely to support City operations and sets forth the circumstances under which City employees may work remotely, and the responsibilities of all parties to any remote work arrangements.

II. Virtual Work Definition and Eligibility

"Virtual work" is defined as conducting work remotely, whether from home or an alternate location away from the office. All employees may be eligible for virtual work, either intermittent or regularly scheduled, depending on their job duties and the operational needs of the Appointing Authority. When necessary, Appointing Authorities may require employees work virtually. All virtual work requires prior approval by an Appointing Authority.

III. Permissible Virtual Work Arrangements

The primary goal of this policy is to enhance workplace flexibility while ensuring that City employees continue to deliver high-quality work product that meets the needs of City government and City residents.

Appointing Authorities may decide how many days per week an employee may work virtually, up to a maximum of three days (or 22.5 hours), unless the Appointing Authority has received authorization to exceed this maximum from the appropriate cabinet member. In exigent circumstances, for example, in the case of an emergency declaration, employees may be authorized to work virtually for an extended period of time beyond this maximum. If employees are allowed to decide which weekdays they work virtually, Appointing Authorities may require that they designate virtual workdays with sufficient advance notice to allow the Appointing Authority to accommodate operational needs.

After an Appointing Authority has approved virtual work for an employee, the Appointing Authority and employee should select an arrangement from those detailed below that best fits the work pattern of that department and the work which the employee in question will be expected to complete. An Appointing Authority may authorize a temporary deviation from a selected arrangement to accommodate unforeseen circumstances on the part of the employee.

- A. *Set Schedule.* Appointing Authorities may use a set schedule for approved virtual work. Set schedule virtual work requires the Appointing Authority develop a schedule for the virtual work to which the employee will be expected to adhere (e.g., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., etc.) Set schedule virtual work should be used when an employee is expected to provide services, either internally or externally, during a set period, and not expected to work outside that period.
- B. *Core Hours.* Appointing Authorities may designate certain “core hours” during which a virtual work employee is expected to be working (e.g. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., etc.) Employees are then permitted to flex the remainder of the workday. Core hours virtual work should be used when employees are expected to be available to work collaboratively or answer questions, but also have self-directed tasks that may be completed without direct interaction or supervision. Employees are required to complete the minimum work hours according to their work schedule (e.g, 7.5 or 8.0 daily, 75 hours biweekly, etc.)

IV. General Guidelines

The City recognizes that its departments, offices, and agencies provide very different services with very different attendant operational needs. The following guidelines are intended to provide a baseline for all virtual work engaged in by City employees and are not intended to prevent Appointing Authorities from issuing additional specific and reasonable rules, restrictions, or policies.

- A. *Work Location and Assessment.* Employees who work virtually on a regular basis are expected to do so from a location that allows the employee to work in an ergonomically appropriate workspace free from distractions. All regular virtual work arrangements should be approved by a departmental safety officer after an assessment of the employee’s home workspace conducted in concert with ergonomic guidelines provided by Risk Management. Appointing Authorities may approve sporadic virtual work without such an assessment.
- B. *Virtual Work Technology.* Employees must have access to appropriate technology to facilitate virtual work.
 - 1. City-owned Devices. Virtual work should be conducted using City-owned devices. Appointing Authorities should work with the Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT) to ensure that City-owned machines are provided to employees who are expected to engage in virtual work.

- i. **Computers.** It is the City's policy to provide laptop computers to employees working virtually. In exigent circumstances, Appointing Authorities may authorize employees to take home desktop computers to facilitate virtual work.
 - ii. **Phones.** Appointing Authorities should provide cellular telephone for employees expected to perform customer-facing functions that involve telephone contact virtually. These cellular telephones may be voice-only if the virtual work does not require data usage.
 - iii. **Peripherals.** When necessary, the City will provide each employee one set of peripherals (keyboard, mouse, monitor). That set of peripherals should be used by the employee at his or her principal work location (e.g., home or office). Other specialized peripherals (e.g., fax machines) may be provided to an employee working virtually when deemed necessary by the Appointing Authority in consultation with CAO and OIT.
 - iv. **Multi-Factor Authentication and Virtual Private Network.** Employees are required to adhere to security measures to limit and control access to their email and network credentials as to preserve and protect City data and technology operations vulnerable to compromise.
2. Personal Electronic Devices. Employees who have not been provided City-owned devices may work virtually using personal devices only with the approval of their Appointing Authority. Appointing Authorities should approve the use of personal devices only under exigent circumstances and may not approve use of personal devices for employees whose work uses programs and databases that do not have web-based interfaces (e.g., FAMIS, etc.), or employees whose work involves sensitive and/or confidential information protected by federal, state, or local statutes (e.g., HIPAA or CHRIA-protected information, taxpayer information, etc). Employees working virtually using personal devices must follow all guidelines set forth in the Office of Innovation and Technology's Personal Computing Device Policy (<https://remotework.phila.gov/wp-content/uploads/Personal-Computing-Device-Policy.pdf>).
- C. *Reimbursable Expenses.* Appointing Authorities may choose to reimburse employees for consumables ordinarily provided to employees while working onsite, such as paper, writing utensils, or other office supplies, when employees must purchase those items to virtual work. All reimbursable expenses must be pre-approved prior to purchase to be eligible for reimbursement. The City will not reimburse employees working virtually for the following expenses:
 - Expenses related to home internet services, including installation costs, ongoing service costs, or data overages;
 - Expenses incurred in purchasing, using, repairing, or replacing personal devices, including computers, cellular telephones, and peripherals such as printers, keyboards, and mice;
 - All other expenses not specifically enumerated as reimbursable in this policy.

- D. *Child Care.* Employees are expected to obtain childcare for dependents as necessary to ensure that employees may effectively work virtually. Appointing Authorities may relax this childcare expectation during exigent circumstances (e.g., sporadic school closures, illness, or other emergencies that prevent employees from obtaining childcare).
- E. *Timekeeping.* Employees may combine virtual work with onsite work and/or leave time when appropriate. All virtual work should be tracked on the employee's timesheet using the appropriate time code provided by payroll.
- F. *Discipline.* Employees working virtually must abide by the same rules, regulations, and policies regarding conduct and work performance that they would be expected to adhere to while working onsite. Employees who fail to follow such rules, regulations, or policies, or who abuse virtual work may have their virtual work privileges be revoked and/or be disciplined, with sanctions up to and including termination.
- G. *Signed Agreements.* Prior to working virtually on a regular basis, an employee must sign a virtual work agreement form that delineates any restrictions on that employee's virtual work and memorializes that employee's agreement to abide by this policy and any other applicable department-specific policies. Appointing Authorities shall maintain signed copies of such agreements for any employees permitted to work virtually on a regular basis.

V. Role Responsibilities

Employees, supervisors, and Appointing Authorities must work cooperatively to ensure that employees' virtual work meets the highest standards of quality and quantity. This section delineates the responsibilities of each role in the virtual work arrangement.

A. Appointing Authority's Responsibilities.

1. Appointing Authorities are expected to work diligently to arrange work so that it can be completed virtually when possible.
2. Appointing Authorities should provide on virtual work schedules, and deviation from those schedules should be pre-approved.
3. Appointing Authorities must ensure that all overtime earned while working virtually is accurately recorded and timely paid, regardless of whether such overtime was approved. If an employee worked unapproved overtime while working virtually, the Appointing Authority should discipline the employee appropriately.
4. Appointing Authorities must ensure that all employees working virtually are provided with appropriate performance metrics and/or deliverable requirements to ensure that those employees produce the quality and quantity of working expected.
5. Appointing Authorities must ensure that all employees working virtually participate in City-offered trainings on virtual work.

B. Supervisor's Responsibilities.

1. Supervisors (or other individuals designated by the Appointing Authority) must approve all virtual work that would result in an employee earning overtime. Supervisors should approve such overtime work only if that employee is working on time-sensitive matters that cannot be completed during a standard work-day.
2. Supervisors will review all work product delivered and functions performed to ensure employees are completing the appropriate quantity and quality of work while working virtually.
3. Supervisors should ensure that employees working virtually may participate in the organization's work to the same extent they would be able to participate if working onsite. This may include ensuring that meetings may be joined virtually, providing call-in numbers for important conference calls, or ensuring that important communications are timely sent by electronic means.
4. Supervisors will immediately document and work to resolve any performance issues.

C. Employee's Responsibilities.

1. Employees must ensure that they are prepared to work virtually prior to engaging in virtual work, including ensuring that they have access to necessary devices, documents, applications, information, and communication tools required to perform work effectively.
2. Employees must preserve work material created while working virtually as they were working onsite, including preserving work material created using personal devices.
3. Employees using personal devices for virtual work must surrender any such device at the City's request so that the City may obtain information for potential disclosure in responding to City obligations, such as Right-to-Know requests, internal or external investigations, or lawsuits.
4. Employees working virtually must regularly submit such records of work deliverables as their Appointing Authorities deem appropriate.
5. Immediately report any and all technical issues related to virtual work to the OIT Support Center by emailing ITHelp@phila.gov. Individuals may report technology emergencies by calling (215) 686-8213. OIT cannot provide support for virtual work being conducted on personal devices.
6. Employees should communicate as necessary with supervisors by email and telephone and plan to participate in scheduled business meetings as if working onsite.
7. Employees are expected to timely attend all trainings targeted towards virtual work.
8. Employees will provide supervisors and HR staff with a contact cellular telephone number, if they have not been provided a city-issued mobile phone by their Appointing Authority. Supervisors will see to it that this information is recorded and available in city administrative systems utilized by human resources and OIT as to contact in case of emergency or cyber security incident.